

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEL AV 00483 01 OF 02 120754Z
ACTION H-03

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/038 W

-----126249 120904Z /11

P R 111517Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 526
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA WQIO
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 0483

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP, PGOV, PINT, IS, US, EG, XF
SUBJECT: BEGIN MEETS WITH CONGRESSMEN CRANE AND DORNAN

1. SUMMARY: IN A MEETING WITH CONGRESSMEN CRANE AND DORNAN, BEGIN MADE NUMEROUS REFERENCES TO HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH SADAT AND QUOTED THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT FREELY IN DISCUSSING WHAT HE SAW AS THE NEGATIVE INFLUENCE EXERTED BY SADAT'S ADVISERS AND SADAT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PLO AND THE REJECTIONSISTS. BEGIN PRESENTED HIS USUAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE PLO AND A WEST BANK STATE AND SOUNDED WARNINGS OF THE THREAT POSED BY A COMBINATION OF SYRIA, IRAQ AND JORDAN. HE ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN AT THE EMERGENCE OF A SOVIET-BACKED ROVING ARMY OF SUBVERSION. BEGIN WAS IN HIS GOOD FORM, DESPITE THE POLITICAL TRIALS OF THE PREVIOUS DAY.
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 00483 01 OF 02 120754Z

END SUMMARY.

2. PRIME MINISTER BEGIN RECEIVED CONGRESSMEN PHILIP CRANE AND ROBERT DORNAN AND THEIR STAFF AIDES RICHARD WILLIAMSON AND MICHAEL CASEY IN HIS OFFICE ON JANUARY 9. THE CONGRESSMEN, IN ISRAEL ON SEPARATE PRIVATE VISITS, WERE ACCOMPANIED BY THE DCM AND POLOFF ROTKLEIN. ALSO PRESENT ON THE

ISRAELI SIDE WERE MOSHE RAVIV, TWO AIDES FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS ADVISOR, DAN PATTIR.

3. CONGRESSMAN CRANE MENTIONED HE HAD BEEN PRESENT AT CODEL ZABLOCKI'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SADAT A FEW DAYS EARLIER AND BEGIN LAUNCHED INTO A SERIES OF ANECDOTES DRAWN FROM HIS OWN MEETINGS WITH THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT. SADAT RECKONS TIME NOW IN TERMS OF BEFORE AND AFTER HIS VISIT TO JERUSALEM, IN THE MANNER OF BC AND AD. BEGIN CLAIMED THAT SADAT DOES NOT BOTHER WITH DETAILS; HE LETS HIS "DOCTORS" ATTEND TO SUCH THINGS. BEGIN SAID THE "DOCTORS" SPOILED AGREEMENTS AT ISMAILIA. IN TWO INSTANCES. INITIALLY THERE WAS AGREED WORDING ON THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM WHICH INCLUDED THE WORDS "A JUST SOLUTION FOR THE PALESTINIAN ARABS." SADAT, HOWEVER RETURNED AFTER A TWENTY MINUTE MEETING WITH HIS "DOCTORS" TO SAY THAT THEY COULD NOT ACCEPT THIS FORMULATION. BEGIN THEN SUGGESTED AN ADJOURNMENT UNTIL THE NEXT DAY, AT WHICH TIME IT WAS DECIDED TO ADOPT "THE CHINA PRECEDENT" I.E., EACH PARTY'S POSITION WOULD BE STATED SEPARATELY. THE SECOND INSTANCE WAS WHEN THE TWO LEADERS WERE ABOUT TO AGREE ON A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. AMBASSADOR MEGUID OBJECTED AND READ THE PARAGRAPH FROM SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 338 WHICH PRESCRIBED IMPLEMENTATION OF 242. HE THEN CLOSED THE FILE HE HAD READ FROM. BEGIN ASKED HIM TO READ CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 00483 01 OF 02 120754Z

THE SUCCEEDING PARAGRAPH WHICH CALLED FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO ARRIVE AT A PEACE SETTLEMENT AND WHICH BEGIN SAID, IMPLIED THERE COULD BE NO IMPLEMENTATION WITHOUT NEGOTIATION. THE LESSON THAT BEGIN DREW FROM THIS WAS THAT MEGUID HAD ATTEMPTED TO MISLEAD BY READING ONLY THE IMPLEMENTATION PARAGRAPH. THE EFFORT WAS FOILED BECAUSE "JUST BY COINCIDENCE," BEGIN KNEW THE RESOLUTION BY HEART. BEGIN FELT THAT SADAT'S DEPENDENCE ON HIS ADVISERS WAS A SIGNIFICANT REVELATION.

4. ANOTHER SURPRISE FOR BEGIN WAS WHEN SADAT DECLARED HE HAD TOLD THE REJECTIONISTS "DON'T PUSH US TO THE WALL, BECAUSE IF YOU DO, WE WILL DECLARE THAT WE ARE NOT ARABS AT ALL." BEGIN MARVELLED THAT SADAT WOULD MAKE SUCH A STATEMENT IN THE PRESENCE OF ISRAELIS. HE THOUGHT SADAT SHARES HIS DETESTATION OF THE PLO. ON ONE OCCASION WHEN BEGIN OBSERVED TO SADAT THAT SOME PLO LEADERS ARE SOVIET AGENTS, SADAT CORRECTED HIM, SAYING "NOT SOME, ALL OF THEM" ARE SOVIET AGENTS. BEGIN ALSO CONFIDED THAT WHEN HE REMINDED SADAT OF THE FATE WHICH ARAB RADIO BROADCASTS DURING THE TENSE DAYS BEFORE THE 1967 WAR SAID AWAITED ISRAELIS, SADAT FURNISHED THE SLOGAN: "WE WILL THROW THEM INTO THE SEA."

5. CONGRESSMEN CRANE SAID THAT HE HAD HEARD FROM SADAT AN

INTERESTING COMMENTARY ON INTER-ARAB RELATIONSHIPS. IN THE DAYS PRIOR TO THE YOM KIPPUR WAR SADAT HAD ASKED ASSAD TO INFORM THE SOVIETS ON OCTOBER 4, 1973, TWO DAYS BEFORE THE ATTACK, THAT WAR WAS ABOUT TO BREAK OUT. LATER SADAT LEARNED THAT THERE HAD BEEN A DEAL BETWEEN ASSAD AND THE SOVIETS BEHIND SADAT'S BACK THAT THE WAR WAS TO BE TERMINATED IN 48 HOURS--THE LENGTH OF TIME THE SYRIANS EXPECTED IT WOULD TAKE THEM TO OVERRUN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS. IT WAS APPARENT TO CRANE THAT SADAT DOES NOT TRUST THE SYRIANS. BEGIN NOTED THATSADAT IS CONVINCED SYRIA WILL EVENTUALLY JOIN THE PEACE EFFORT. HOWEVER, BEGIN AGREED WITH THE CONGRESSMAN'S OBSERVATION THAT STATEMENTS OUT OF SYRIA ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY VIOLENT, EVEN INCLUDING THREATS OF ASSASSINATION.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 TEL AV 00483 01 OF 02 120754Z

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 00483 02 OF 02 120856Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 0483

6. CONGRESSMAN DORNAN SAID THAT HE AND CONGRESSMAN CRANE WERE BOTH CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICANS. HE BRIEFLY SKETCHED CRANE'S BACKGROUND AND INDICATED THAT HE WOULD BE A STRONG CONTENDER FOR THE REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION IN 1980. DORNAN, THEREFORE, ENCOURAGED BEGIN TO BE FORTHCOMING IN OUTLINING FOR THE TWO CONGRESSMEN ISRAEL'S DEFENSE NEEDS. DORNAN ADDED THAT HE BELIEVED THAT ISRAEL COULD NOT YIELD THE GOLAN. BEGIN NODDED IN APPROVAL AND REMARKED THAT THERE WERE 2,400 SOVIET ADVISERS IN SYRIA AND THEN LAUNCHED INTO A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF GOLAN'S STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE FOR NORTHERN ISRAEL. BEGIN THEN MOVED TO A RECITATION OF THE INHERENT DANGERS TO BOTH JORDAN AND ISRAEL OF A PLO STATE ON THE WEST BANK. HE BELIEVED THAT SADAT FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE PROBLEM. BEGIN REPEATED HIS WELL-KNOWN DESCRIPTION OF THE PLO AS A VILE ORGANIZATION, REJOICING IN THE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEL AV 00483 02 OF 02 120856Z

SLAUGHTER OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN. ALTHOUGH NOT ASKED, HE ASSERTED "WE OURSELVES (PRESUMABLY IRGUN) ALWAYS WARNED CIVILIANS, BOTH ARAB AND BRITISH, TO LEAVE ZONES OF IMPENDING VIOLENCE." HE ADDED THAT ALTHOUGH THE INNOCENT OFTEN SUFFER IN TIMES OF WAR, "AMERICANS KNOW THAT ONLY TOO WELL," HIS FORCES DID ITS BEST TO AVOID INVOLVING NON COMBATANTS.

7. WARMING UP TO HIS CONDEMNATION OF THE PLO, BEGIN CLAIMED THAT WERE IT NOT FOR ISRAEL, THE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS WOULD HAVE BEEN "WIPE OUT". HE CITED THE EXAMPLE OF A CHRISTIAN VILLAGE AT ONE POINT SEIZED BY LEBANESE CHRISTIAN FORCES FROM THE PLO. UPON LATER RECONQUERING THE VILLAGE, THE PLO KILLED 400 OF THE VILLAGERS IN COLD BLOOD AFTER THE BATTLE HAD ENDED. BEGIN CRITICIZED COMPARISONS OFTEN MADE BY OUTSIDERS BETWEEN THE PLO AND OTHER REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATIONS. AS AN EXAMPLE, HE REFERRED TO THE ALGERIAN FLN; THE DIFFERENCE, ACCORDING TO BEGIN, WAS THAT THE FLN DID NOT WANT PARIS, ONLY ALGERIA. HOWEVER, THE PLO DEMANDS TEL AVIV. BEGIN WAS HAPPY TO NOTE THAT NOW BOTH PRESIDENT CARTER AND NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER BRZEZINSKI AGREED THAT THE PLO CAN PLAY NO PART IN NEGOTIATIONS.

8. BEGIN ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT TERRORIST ACTIVITY ELSEWHERE. THE WORLD IS CURRENTLY PLAGUED BY A "PEREGRINATING ARMY" ON BEHALF OF COMMUNISM. COMPOSED OF RUSSIANS, CUBANS, ETC., IT TURNS UP WHEREVER THE COMMUNISTS HAVE AN INTEREST. BEGIN THEN WENT TO A LARGE WALL MAP OF AFRICA TO EMPHASIZE THE THREAT OF GROWING SOVIET INFLUENCE IN ETHIOPIA. AGAIN, HE REFERRED TO A SIMILARITY OF VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT WITH SADAT.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 00483 02 OF 02 120856Z

9. BEGIN CLAIMED THAT IRAQ HAD RECENTLY ACQUIRED THE CAPACITY TO PUT FOUR ARMOURED DIVISIONS ON ISRAEL'S EASTERN BORDER. HE SAID SYRIA, IRAQ AND JORDAN ALONE NOW HAVE TWICE AS MANY TANKS AS EGYPT. EVEN WITH THE HOPED FOR PEACE WITH EGYPT BASED ON HIS PROPOSALS TO SADAT WHICH BEGIN CALLED "FAIR," HE BELIEVED THERE WOULD BE GREAT DANGER FROM THE EAST AND THE NORTH. WHAT HE WANTED FROM THE US WAS NOT TROOPS BUT THE TOOLS FOR DEFENSE. BEGIN THEREUPON REPEATED HIS WELL-KNOWN POSITION VIZ: WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967 LINES WOULD PLACE ISRAEL IN MORTAL DANGER. HE RECALLED THAT BRZEZINSKI HAD STATED THAT IF ISRAEL WERE IN MORTAL DANGER THE US WOULD RUSH TO ITS DEFENSE. BEGIN'S REPLY HAD SIMPLY BEEN "THANK YOU BUT WE DON'T WANT TO BE IN MORTAL DANGER."

10. DORNAN SAID HE HAD FLOWN A KFIR THE OTHER DAY OVER SINAI AND NOW APPRECIATED THE AREA'S STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE FOR ISRAEL. HE HAD VIEWED ISRAEL'S AIR BASES IN SINAI AND COULD NOT SEE HOW ISRAEL COULD AFFORD TO WITHDRAW FROM THEM. BEGIN INDICATED THAT ISRAEL REQUIRED THREE AIRFIELDS IN SINAI. ONE NEAR RAFAH, ONE NEAR EILAT AND ANOTHER AT SHARM EL SHEIKH. HE IS SEEKING TO HOLD THEM FOR AN INTERIM PERIOD OF THREE TO FIVE YEARS. AS THE CODELS ROSE TO LEAVE CASEY ASKED IF BEGIN THOUGHT THE US SHOULD PRODUCE THE B-1 BOMBER. BEGIN REPLIED THE US AND THE FREE WORLD SHOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR DETERENT STRENGTH.

11. COMMENT: BEGIN EXHIBITED HIS USUAL AMIABLE AND GRACIOUS SELF AND APPARENTLY ENJOYED THE SESSION. HIS GOOD FORM SEEMED NONE THE WORSE FOR HIS HEAVY SCHEDULE THE PREVIOUS (ACCORDING TO BEGIN, 20-HOURS), DAY, WHICH INCLUDED A PROLONGED CABINET SESSION AFTER A

GRUELING HERUT CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING. THERE WAS NO SIGN OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WEAR FROM THE DISAPPOINTMENT HE NO DOUBT SUFFERED AT
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 TEL AV 00483 02 OF 02 120856Z

THE STORMY HERUT MEETING. BEGIN RADIATED PRIDE IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH SADAT, OBVIOUS FROM HIS REPEATED REFERENCES TO HIM THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION. BEGIN SEEMED ALSO TO TAKE DELIGHT IN THE NUMEROUS COMMENTS OF SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL VOICED BY THE CONGRESSMEN.

12. THIS MESSAGE WAS NOT CLEARED BY THE CODELS PRIOR
THEIR DEPARTURE.
LEWIS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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